

DEPARTMENT OF STATE

Approved by Mr. Brown
9/3/69

Memorandum of Conversation

13358

DATE: August 31, 1969

SUBJECT: TWA Hijacking

PARTICIPANTS: Rodger P. Davies, Acting Assistant Secretary, NEA
Clyde Williams, TWA

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Mr. Davies told Mr. Williams of his conversation with Shlomo Argov earlier in the morning. He informed Williams that he had told Argov in confidence about the bomb threat. Davies added that he told Argov that as a government we had an interest in all U.S. flag carriers and that if any harm were done to TWA's material or commercial interests, consideration would be given to measures we could take to equalize the situation. Mr. Davies noted to Williams that Mrs. Meir's statement had tended to trigger many of the emotional reactions that we have noted over the hijacking incident. Davies also briefed Williams on Argov's explanation of Mr. Meir's ill-advised statement. He also informed Williams of his request to Argov that the Israeli Government do everything possible to cool the situation.

Mr. Williams noted that he has been continually harassed by the Israeli Consulate General in New York. He said the harassment has been so bad that his New York office has not opened today. He has been receiving telephone calls at home. Mr. Davies told him that if the Consulate General causes him any more trouble to let him know and he would ask Shlomo Argov to instruct the Consulate not to contact him further.

Mr. Williams said that there has been an organized effort to dictate to TWA what it should do in connection with the hijacking

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incident and that they have received threats that were not veiled. Mr. Williams thought that something could be worked out with the Syrians if their man (Mr. Wiser) can go through with his plan to go to Damascus. If something prevents this trip, there will be serious problems. He voiced fear that Israeli actions might have an adverse effect on this trip. Mr. Davies agreed that the Israelis would bear some responsibility for any adverse SARG reaction.

Mr. Wiser reported that TWA has been in constant contact with the Syrian Permanent Representative to the UN. The Ambassador is urging his Government to release the Israelis but he has made numerous references to the question of an exchange of prisoners.

In closing, Mr. Davies noted that he had told Shlomo Argov that there was a fair chance that the Syrians would go through the door we had left open for them.

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